



Michigan League FOR Human Services

Testimony on Low-Income Energy Efficiency Fund House Committee on Energy and Technology

**Anika Fassia
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Good morning, Chairman Horn and members of the committee. I am Anika Fassia, Policy Analyst for the Michigan League for Human Services. The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan statewide policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that Michigan's struggling residents achieve economic security. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The Michigan League for Human Services asks the committee to take up House Bill 5008. This legislation will help ensure that those needing heating assistance will receive it as the weather is turning cold.

Along with the federally funded LIHEAP, LIEEF is the main program providing heating assistance and preventing emergency shutoffs to the residents of Michigan. LIEEF has been operating since 2002 and keeps 95,000 Michigan families out of the cold. Without action, LIEEF funds cannot be distributed and some families and children will find themselves without heat. House Bill 5008 is a simple solution to prevent this from happening. This is not an issue of funding. The funding is there, frozen in escrow. A simple error in legislation is keeping children and families from receiving the heating assistance needed to keep them safe and warm through the winter. We do not need to change LIEEF, but restore the Michigan Public Service Commission as the entity that oversees these funds. HB 5008 simply restores the Michigan Public Service Commission's role in administering funding for heating assistance across the state.

It is also important that all funding for LIEEF remain intact. Although heating assistance is crucial, energy efficiency assistance provides the state with long-term savings by creating jobs and preventing future increases in heating expenses through weatherization and maintenance. Energy efficiency is a key component to LIEEF because it is an investment in current and future housing and helps families by keeping costs down.

The League hopes the committee will pass this legislation in a timely manner so that families and children will be protected.